

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUSSEL 00111 200850Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3396
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN
USAREUR
USAFE
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS DUSSELDORF 0111

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, BBAK, EFIN, GW
SUBJ: NEW LAND GOVERNMENT UNDER SHARP ATTACK - COALITION
TO BE CONTINUED

REF: DUSSELDORF 0104, 0101, 0088

1. THE NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIAN (NRW) CDU TOOK THE
OPPORTUNITY OF THE SECOND BUDGET READING ON JAN 18
TO LAUNCH SHARP ATTACKS ON THE NRW LAND GOVERNMENT
IN GENERAL AND ON MINISTER PRESIDENT HEINZ KUEHN IN
PARTICULAR. THE AMMUNITION WAS AFFORDED BY THE POUILLAIN
AFFAIR FOR WHICH OPPOSITION LEADER HEINRICH KOEPLER
HELD KUEHN RESPONSIBLE. HIS SPEECH AS WELL AS THE
SPEECHES OF ALL OTHER CDU LANDTAG DEPUTIES CULMINATED
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IN THE DEMAND FOR KUEHN'S RESIGNATION.

2. KUEHN HAD SOME DIFFICULTY COUNTERING THE CDU
ATTACKS. HE DECLARED THAT THE DCU WAS TRYING TO TURN
THE POUILLAIN AFFAIR INTO A KUEHN AFFAIR, IN ORDER NOT
ONLY TO OVERTHROW THE DUESSELDORF SPD/FDP GOVERNMENT
COALITION BUT ALSO, VIA DUESSELDORF, THE COALITION IN

BONN. KUEHN MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF RESIGNING OVER OF THE POUILLAIN AFFAIR.

3. KUEHN WAS SUPPORTED BY SPEAKERS FROM HIS OWN PARTY, THE SPD, WHO ASSURED HIM OF THEIR LOYALTY (NOTWITHSTANDING KUEHN'S ACCEPTANCE THE EVENING BEFORE OF FINANCE MINISTER HALSTENBERG'S RESIGNATION TO WHOM THE FACTION HAD ALSO PLEDGED SUPPORT).

4. FDP FACTION CHAIRMAN HANS KOCH DECLARED THAT THE FACTION WAS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THE GOOD COOPERATION AND COALITION WITH THE SPD UNTIL THE NEXT LANDTAG ELECTIONS IN 1980, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER KUEHN STAYS IN OFFICE UNTIL 1980 OR IS REPLACED BY A PARTY COLLEAGUE BEFORE THAT TIME. FDP LANDTAG DEPUTY WOLFRAM DORN ON THE OTHER HAND INSINUATED THAT SUPPORT FOR KUEHN MIGHT NOT CONTINUE BEYOND "THE NEAR FUTURE."

5. COMMENT: THE OUTWARD SHOW OF SOLIDARITY OF THE SPD FACTION WITH KUEHN IS NOT MATCHED BY INTERNAL SENTIMENT IN THE FACTION. THE FACTION IS PARTICULARLY FURIOUS THAT KUEHN ONCE MORE YIELDED TO THE JUNIOR PARTNER, WHO DEMANDED AND GOT FINANCE MINISTER HALSTENBERG'S SCALP. A STRONG GROUP IN THE PARTY DEMANDS AN EARLY RESIGNATION BUT FAR ENOUGH REMOVED TO DISCONNECT IT FROM THE POUILLAIN CASE. SCIENCE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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RESEARCH MINISTER JOHANNES RAU AND JUSTICE MINISTER DR. DIETHER POSSER ARE THE LIKELIEST CHOICES TO SUCCEED KUEHN. THE CDU WILL NOT INTRODUCE A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE AGAINST KUEHN BUT IT IS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN A RELENTLESS PURSUIT. IT HOPES TO MAKE POLITICAL HAY OUT OF THE QUOTE DESOLATE SITUATION OF THE NRW LAND GOVERNMENT UNQUOTE DURING THE FOUR LANDTAG ELECTIONS IN THE FRG IN 1978. SOME CDU CIRCLES EVEN EXPECT THAT THE FDP MIGHT CONSIDER CHANGING PARTNERS IN NRW IF THE OUTCOME OF THE ABOVE ELECTIONS SHOULD FAVOR THE CDU AND PUSH THE FDP CLOSE TO OR BELOW THE 5 PERCENT MARK. FOR THE PRESENT, HOWEVER, THE SPD/FDP COALITION SEEMS TO BE HOLDING FIRM IN NRW. DUX

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